

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 4, 9, 11, and 17; add new claims 21 and 22; and, amend the remaining claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting from a plurality of ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication comprising:
 - inputting a first party's ability to communicate with a second party;
 - evaluating a cost effectiveness of a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication based on said first party's ability to communicate, said evaluating comprising:
 - inputting said first party's ability into a decision tree,
 - determining a cost of establishing and maintaining said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication,
 - determining a savings associated with said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication, and
 - comparing said cost to said savings to calculate a return on investment associated with said establishing and said maintaining of said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication;
 - repeating said evaluating for a different ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication if said first party's ability does not match a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication previously evaluated; and
 - implementing a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication when said first

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party's ability matches a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication.

2. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 1, wherein a substance of said communication arrangements modes of communication comprise at least one of purchase order and billing communications between a purchasing corporation and a supplier.

3. (Original) The method in claim 2, wherein said first party comprises said supplier and said second party comprises said purchasing corporation.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 1, wherein said decision tree orders ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication that are evaluated by their cost effectiveness to the second party.

6. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 1, further comprising before said implementing, performing a cost-benefit analysis with respect to a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication matching said first parties ability.

7. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 6, wherein said cost-benefit analysis compares the cost of establishing a matching ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication to the cost of a next ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication.

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8. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting from a plurality of ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication comprising:

inputting a first party's ability to communicate with a second party;

evaluating a cost effectiveness of a standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication based on said first party's ability to communicate, wherein said mode of communication comprises at least one of telephone, facsimile, e-mail, hard copy mail, and at least one on-line communication arrangement, and wherein a substance of said mode of communication comprises at least one of purchase order and billing communications between a purchasing corporation and a supplier;

repeating said evaluating for a non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication if said first parties ability does not match a standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication previously evaluated, wherein said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication has a cost above said standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication, and wherein said evaluating comprises:

inputting said first party's ability into a decision tree,

determining a cost of establishing and maintaining said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication,

determining a savings associated with said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication, and

comparing said cost to said savings to calculate a return on investment associated with said establishing and said maintaining of said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~

mode of communication;

performing a cost-benefit analysis with respect to a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication matching said first parties ability; and

implementing said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication when said first party's ability matches said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication and said cost-benefit shows said non-standard ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication is justified.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 9 8, wherein said first party comprises said supplier and said second party comprises said purchasing corporation.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 8, wherein said decision tree orders ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication that are evaluated by their cost effectiveness to the second party.

13. (Currently Amended) The method in claim 8, wherein said cost-benefit analysis compares the cost of establishing a matching ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication to the cost of a next ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication.

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14. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by machine tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for selecting from a plurality of ~~communications arrangement~~ modes of communication, said method comprising:

inputting a first party's ability to communicate with a second party;

evaluating a cost effectiveness of a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication based on said first party's ability to communicate, said evaluating comprising:

inputting said first party's ability into a decision tree,

determining a cost of establishing and maintaining said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication,

determining a savings associated with said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication, and

comparing said cost to said savings to calculate a return on investment associated with said establishing and said maintaining of said ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication;

repeating said evaluating for a different ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication if said first party's ability does not match a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication previously evaluated; and

implementing a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication when said first party's ability matches a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication.

15. (Currently Amended) The program storage device in claim 14, wherein a substance of said ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication comprise at least one of purchase order and billing communications between a purchasing corporation and a supplier.
16. (Original) The program storage device in claim 15, wherein said first party comprises said supplier and said second party comprises said purchasing corporation.
17. (Canceled).
18. (Currently Amended) The program storage device in claim 14, wherein said decision tree orders ~~communication arrangements~~ modes of communication that are evaluated by their cost effectiveness to the second party.
19. (Currently Amended) The program storage device in claim 14, further comprising before said implementing, performing a cost-benefit analysis with respect to a ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication matching said first parties ability.
20. (Original) The program storage device in claim 19, wherein said cost-benefit analysis compares the cost of establishing a matching ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication to the cost of a next ~~communication arrangement~~ mode of communication.

21. (New) The method in claim 1, wherein said evaluating and said implementing of said mode of communication comprises evaluating and implementing at least one of telephone, facsimile, e-mail, hard copy mail, and at least one on-line communication arrangement.

22. (New) The program storage device in claim 14, wherein said mode of communication comprises at least one of telephone, facsimile, e-mail, hard copy mail, and at least one on-line communication arrangement.